

REFLECTIONS

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He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

John 1:10-11

The Unexpected

The picture revealed an image of a man who was not as I supposed him to be. From his writings, I had pictured a frumpy look with few handsome features, perhaps with mussed hair and a foreign look in his eye. But the image was quite the opposite. It made me realize how wrong I might be about other characteristics of this man whose writings stimulate my mind.

I wondered if my expectation of a deep powerful speaking voice pouring forth eloquent words fit the reality of how God had made him. His voice might neither be deep nor powerful; and the words he speaks may be far less eloquent than the words he writes. It is entirely possible that the measure of the man I expected is in real life far different from the image I painted in my mind.

Of course, I have miscast many other people along the way—tall, handsome movie stars that are not tall at all, athletes with friendly smiles who are not friendly at all, and childhood heroes whose lives fall short of the standards we should live by. Time has taught me that the unexpected is indeed what we should come to expect.

And so it was in the days so long ago when God sent his Son into the world. The prophets had told of his coming, much of it described in great detail. Scripture painted a picture that seemed so very clear. Yet who expected John the Baptist to be the Elijah figure the prophets said would precede the Christ child, or a king to be born in such a humble setting. The Messiah went unrecognized when He entered Jerusalem astride a donkey though Scripture described the scene clearly. And there were still more surprises.

From the prophets' words came a picture of a powerful king who would subdue evil doers and destroy evil practices with destructive force. It was a picture of a king who rules forever, but his kingdom was expected in earthly terms, not as God had planned it.

Sometimes we cast the wrong picture. Misperceptions cause us to misjudge realities that emerge before us just as people did when our Messiah walked the earth. And so it may also be when our beloved Christ comes again. Scripture tells us what to expect; but as we paint those expectations in our minds, let's leave room for the unexpected.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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